

IN MEMORIAM

Tribute to Nina Ogden

by Alan Ogden

March 5—Our dear Nina slipped away February 28 at the age of 69. She grew up in the Bronx, New York City, the child of refugees from the Russian Civil War. Her first language was Russian. Her father worked in the needle trades and was an active union man in the International Ladies Garment Workers Union, and her mother was a union organizer. As a person is her parents' child, Nina's identity as a lifelong fighter for social justice was formed from the cauldron of the labor organizing battles of the 1930s, as was her patriotism and her lifelong, strong intellectual identity. Beginning as a pre-teen, she rode the New York subway alone to the Metropolitan Opera each Saturday afternoon, to see and hear live, and to learn, all the major operas. Her parents loved literature, especially Shakespeare, and studied Shakespeare to hone their English language skills, and Shakespeare was a central influence for Nina from that time to the present. Nina loved playing the violin and played at Carnegie Hall with a student orchestra. She graduated from Evander Childs High School in 1963 at the age of 16—the end of her schooling, but not the end of her education!

As a young girl, she joined the civil rights movement after talking to picketers she encountered on a New York street. One of them told her, "We are fighting for civil rights, and we won't stop until we've won." She joined the picket line—and the civil rights movement—on the spot, and when the picket line broke up, and somebody said it was time to go home, Nina's response was, "I thought we weren't stopping until we've won!" She was at the Washington March for Jobs and Freedom in 1963 ("I have a dream"), and the famous Selma-to-Montgomery March in 1965. Her 1960s civil

rights organizing even included hitchhiking across Canada to organize for Inuit rights with Stokely Carmichael.

I first met Nina in Fayetteville, Arkansas, in 1968. She was involved in a very hazardous effort by the textile workers to unionize the textile mills of that state, going to towns where being a union organizer was painting a target on your back.

We were married in Richmond, Virginia, in 1969. After the 1968 assassination of Dr. King, the civil rights movement was in a crisis, as the Black Panther Party and other black nationalists tried to assert intentions quite different from the intentions of Dr. King. Nina and I were told point blank that we were not wanted in the new version of the civil rights movement.

Nina worked in office jobs later, but in those early days, she worked in mill and factory jobs—in a cotton mill, at a book bindery, in a hat factory as a member of the Hat, Cap and Millinery Workers Union, and at Philip Morris as a member of the Tobacco Workers International Union.

August 1971 Wake-Up Call

We decided to put our political efforts into organizing the unemployed and the general community to support and back the union battles going on at the time, such as the strike by the workers of the *Richmond Times-Dispatch* newspaper. We called them Strike Support Committees, and had a little organization of nine close associates, who were like a little political committee to mobilize black churches, community organizations, peace groups, and others. When Dick Nixon announced his actions to end the Bretton Woods System and implement a national wage-price freeze in August

1971, we wanted to launch immediate mass organizing to oppose it, but we also realized our yawning ignorance of the issues involved, and of any coherent sense of economic policy.

So our little organization put two young women on a bus to New York City, with the mission of finding out who, among the vast tangle of purported social justice and leftist groups, could actually explain what was happening, and who intended to change it. Nina was one of those two delegates, and she phoned me up after a couple of days to say she had heard Lyndon LaRouche speak, and that he was the one we would be working with.

I strenuously and ignorantly objected, and continued to do so for several months. We had been well aware of LaRouche and his movement, and had been contacted by a labor organizer affiliated with LaRouche, but we had never been successfully recruited. So, as was so often the case over the years, Nina was right, and I was wrong, but Nina had no thought of giving up. We nine all went to New York for the national conference that Christmas, and after hearing Lyn speak and answer questions over the first day or two of the conference, I took Nina out for a walk on the cold wintry streets, and I told her, okay, I'm in. So (only because of Nina) we joined, not just as two recruits, but as a pre-formed nine-person local, the Hampton Roads Labor Committee, at the end of 1971.

God in Their Own Hearts

Nina, during these more than forty years in LaRouche's organization, has been a leader with a certain unique and fresh approach, always reaching out into new and unknown situations, talking to new and unknown people, looking for ways to touch the best in their natures. She was an initiator, a forward-driving force, who gave others confidence to discover a reflection of God in their own hearts, and—as they saw Nina herself do—to boldly act on that knowledge and that hope.

Her national and then international initiatives, on behalf of a new, just world system, involved a large array of political and diplomatic figures, including key figures dating back to the John F. Kennedy era, such as Jesuit Father Richard McSorley and Pierre Salinger; key church figures including Lebanese Maronite Catholic Bishop Elias El-Hayek, a central figure in the efforts to forge a lasting ecumenical peace in the Middle East; and including many of the major Twentieth Cen-

tury giants in the FDR tradition of the Democratic Party, such as (just to name a few already publicly known), Sen. Eugene McCarthy, Sen. George McGovern, Congressman Jim Wright of Texas, and Congressman Andy Jacobs of Indiana. Precious, important people from Dr. King's movement became Nina's friends and political collaborators.

Nina made many organizing trips to the Great Plains states, and made a lasting impact especially in South Dakota and Nebraska, through personal, intensive, and open collaboration with leaders of the political world, of agriculture, Native American tribes, and others.

She volunteered to fight alongside the Irish for the cause of Irish liberty, to knock down the oppression and brutality of the British imperial system, right in its own back yard. After working with wonderful collaborators in Ireland, and after making a three-week organizing trip there in 2013, her unfinished work there included not only Irish national unity and independence from British governors and British decrees, but the revival of the plan, of Sinn Fein founder Arthur Griffith and independence leader Michael Collins, that Ireland might be established as a maritime industrial nation, harnessing its natural resources and taking its rightful place in the new, emerging world development geometry.

'Miracles Take Hard Work'

Close to Nina's heart was Mother Teresa, now officially known as Saint Teresa of Kolkata. Mother Teresa and Nina forged a close personal working relationship, to work to change the hearts of the nations to recognize the dignity of every individual human person. Nina believed that hearts can be changed and that good will triumph. Nina was able to forge a public collaboration between Lyndon LaRouche and Mother Teresa, the latter a person of key influence worldwide, especially on the crucial, central fight against the efforts of the Malthusians, who would rather eliminate billions of people than recognize the preciousness of the human soul.

Mother Teresa publicly authorized Nina Ogden of the Schiller Institute to issue 5,000 copies of a Schiller Institute broadsheet to be put into the hands of every delegate at the potentially very dangerous 1994 UN World Population Conference in Cairo, Egypt. It contained the text of Mother Teresa's address to the Presidential Prayer Breakfast in Washington, on the right and dignity of life.

Nina also solicited and organized a direct, very

public intervention by Mother Teresa against the death penalty for convicted murderer Joseph Roger O'Dell in Virginia, which even included a tape-recorded message in Mother Teresa's own voice, heard every half-hour on a Richmond radio news program, appealing to Gov. George Allen to spare O'Dell's life.

Mother Teresa once told Nina, "Most people think that miracles just happen, but you and I know that they take a lot of hard work." In a nutshell, this was Nina's guiding idea, and her assurance that if she gave people a lot of love, but no peace (also a Mother Teresa characteristic), that the good will triumph.

Nina and I were married for 48 years. I cherish every day I spent with her—now more than ever. I have abundant memories and graces because of her, that would fill to overflowing the biggest supertanker in the Suez Canal. She loved well, and I loved her in return. She was a singular, strong-willed, and wonderful woman.

Some of Nina's favorite lines were from *The Spiritual Cantic of St. John of the Cross*:

If, then, I am no longer seen on the
common,

You will say that I am lost;

That, stricken by love,

I lost myself, and was found.

Nina is also survived by her son and daughter-in-law, Matthew and Meghan Ogden of Purcellville, Virginia; her daughter Erika Vaughan of Houston, Texas; her sister Lenore Sanders of Leesburg, Virginia; her

nephew Joshua Smith of Harper's Ferry, West Virginia; and a host of in-laws and friends around the world.

A Selection of Articles by Nina

God Bless You, Mother Teresa

http://www.larouchepub.com/eiw/public/1997/eirv24n38-19970919/eirv24n38-19970919_058-god_bless_you_mother_teresa.pdf

Blessed Mother Teresa: A Fleeting Glimpse of the Sublime

http://www.larouchepub.com/eiw/public/2003/eirv30n42-20031031/eirv30n42-20031031_040-blessed_mother_teresa_a_fleeting.pdf

Eugene McCarthy: He Acted to Restore Our Nation's Purpose

[http://larouchepub.com/eiw/public/2005/2005_50-52/2005_50-52/pdf/34-35_50_nat_obit.pdf](http://larouchepub.com/eiw/public/2005/2005_50-52/2005_50-52/2005-52/pdf/34-35_50_nat_obit.pdf)

Pierre Salinger and the Institution of the Presidency

http://www.larouchepub.com/eiw/public/2004/eirv31n42-20041029/eirv31n42-20041029_063-in_memoriam_pierre_salinger_and.pdf

A Westphalian Life: Msgr. Elias El-Hayek

http://www.larouchepub.com/eiw/public/2008/2008_20-29/2008_20-29/2008-22/pdf/64_3522.pdf

George McGovern: A Courageous Democrat in the Mold of JFK

http://larouchepub.com/eiw/public/2012/eirv39n42-20121026/56_3942.pdf